

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

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MARSHAL STALIN MEETS METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

Reuter reports that the following historic statement was broadcast from Moscow on Sunday, September 5th:

"On Saturday Stalin, as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, received Metropolitan Sergius (*locum tenens* of the Patriarch's see), the Leningrad Metropolitan Alexey, and Nikolay, Metropolitan of the Ukraine. Molotov, vice-chairman of the council, was present.

"In the course of the interview the Metropolitan Sergius informed the chairman that the authoritative circles of the Orthodox Church had formed the intention of convening in the near future a conclave of bishops for the election of a Patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia, and for the establishment of a Holy Synod. The head of the Government, Comrade J. V. Stalin, then stated that on the part of the Government there would be no objection to this proposal."

THE DAY OF PRAYER

We shall not attempt to give a full account of the National Day of Prayer held on the fourth anniversary of the outbreak of war, Friday, September 3rd. The general course of the day, the striking broadcast services and the activities of churches throughout the country will be already familiar to our readers.

It may be of interest, however, to mention a few experiments which have come to our notice.

At a great munition factory where there are resident chaplains and a factory chapel, a very full programme of services was arranged. A large number of local clergy (Anglican, Free Church and Roman Cath-

olic) were on duty at different times, so that no fewer than fourteen services were held throughout the day. The factory officials provided all the support and assistance which the church authorities could desire. In a hostel connected with this factory a special Anglican and Free Church combined service was held in the evening.

In a number of towns civic services were held (e.g. the Mayor of an East London borough invited the townspeople to join him in such a service in the Town Hall). In other towns shops were closed at a given hour (at the request of the Chamber of Trade) to allow all to attend services conducted by local clergy.

Perhaps the most striking single observance was the broadcast service conducted in Trafalgar Square at 11 a.m. (attended by 10,000 people), but it is now well known that the prayer and thanksgiving to which the King invited his people was widely observed in town and country, factories, offices, the Services, the homes and schools of the land. Services in hop-gardens and Kentish orchards were held during brief intervals between work.

The Newcastle Journal for September 3rd gives an account of an important meeting of prominent laymen held in the City Council Chamber of Newcastle on September 2nd to give active support to the "Manchester Movement." This has as its aim the bringing of Christian principles into business and economic life. The Lord Mayor (Alderman Walter Thompson), who was supported by many prominent laymen of the district, said, "No durable world settlement can be made unless it is inspired by the principles of Christianity. I have never felt it easier," he continued, "to talk of deep spiritual things than at this time and to try to practise the spirit of Christianity in our own lives."

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Councillor Pugh said that in any planned society such as they were looking forward to, it was important that Christian principles should bind the people together.

After Lord Grey had added his support to the Lord Mayor's action, saying that the people of Northumberland would gladly accord him loyal assistance, Sir Cuthbert Headlam, M.P., said it was quite clear that the country was in a mood for some spiritual revival as a whole. At the same time he did not see how it was possible to start an evangelical campaign by laymen only; its success would largely depend upon the work and cooperation of the Churches.

It was agreed on the Lord Mayor's suggestion that those present should form themselves into a group of workers and arrange for a larger meeting.

"THE GREATER TASK BEYOND VICTORY": BISHOP OF SOUTHWELL'S COMMENTS

In his Diocesan Magazine for September the Bishop of Southwell, Dr. F. R. Barry, writes:

"The news becomes more and more exciting; people are even beginning to ask themselves whether the end might possibly come this year.

"We do not know when the end will come, or what price we may yet have to pay. But just because things are so much better we need perhaps to be faithfully reminded that the turn of the tide may be the real danger-point; any relaxation of effort now might prolong the struggle for years. The longer it lasts, the less hope will there be of rebuilding the new world from the ruins. The clear duty now is to throw in everything, sparing no exertion and no sacrifice, for victory in the shortest time possible.

"When by the mercy of God that is given to us, it will be but the prelude to a greater task; and how far are we ready to face that? All this facile talk about 'planning' may, I think, only too easily be a way of escape from the real issues. It is no good talking about a planned society so long as we run away from the question,—

What is society to be planned for?

And that in turn is a question of theology,—

What is the Will of God for men and women?

What does human life really mean?

What are the things worth living for and dying for?

"Till that is faced we are all at cross purposes. If we want to start on any creative building we must not be at the mercy of catch-phrases. There are plenty of them about at present. Equal opportunity, for instance.

"Equal opportunity for what? . . . We have surely to ask whether these things for which we claim equal opportunity—education is the crucial instance—are in themselves things that are worth having, and what kind of things *are* most worth having. That involves having some clear idea what are the true purposes of a man's life—as the phrase goes, some standard of real values; which means in the end, some knowledge of the true God.

"Now the real danger of modern democracy is that it should turn its back on this truth and think it 'democratic' to claim that any opinion is just as good as another. The truly democratic equality does not mean anything so silly. It means a society in which all men 'count,' all have a life to live and a part to play, and should have opportunity to become their best, because *all* matter, in the sight of God. True democracy rests upon religion; and religion rests upon the recognition of the overriding sovereignty of God, and the supremacy of real values. Without that we are all at sixes and sevens.

"The sources of politics lie beyond politics. If we try to embark on widespread social change, without some great conviction in common about the things which give life its meaning, we shall end in a social and moral chaos, leading inevitably to dictatorship.

"'Mass - democracy' always ends in tyranny.

"Thus we cannot hope to see through the task to which our people is dedicated, for which we have paid so mighty a price already, unless there is at the heart of our common life a true and vitalising faith in God. In all our plans and dreams for reconstruction the Church has still the decisive part to play. Here is an extract from a letter written by an officer in Tunis:

"I reckon a battle without faith is impossible. And our boys had faith, and they won a battle. I hope it will be so after it's finished . . . And above all, the officers who lead in battle lead in this too, and I'm convinced that when we've won this war, there will be a return to Church by the people at home, led by us, not in the spirit that 'Faith

without works is dead," but in the spirit that "works without Faith are dead."

"Are we ready at home to take part in that movement?"

A LAST MESSAGE FROM DR. WILLIAM PATON

The British Press, secular as well as religious, has paid many notable tributes to the invaluable work of the late Dr. William Paton in the sphere of international Christian relationships, and the great loss which his death involves has been recognised in America, North Africa and other countries as fully as in Great Britain itself.

As it happened, just before his death Dr. Paton had recorded the last of a series of talks on world reconstruction given by British Church leaders in the Overseas B.B.C. Services. With the consent of his family it was broadcast in spite of his death. The talk was characterised by the broad vision and sense of realities which always marked Dr. Paton's utterances. He was commenting on the "Six Points" drawn up by the commission of the Federal Council of Churches in the U.S.A. on "The Bases of a Just and Durable Peace." We quote from this talk some of the general statements with which Dr. Paton prefaced and concluded his survey of the six points:

"Before we begin to discuss the six points separately there is one general remark to be made: The right of the Churches, or of people who in some sense speak in the Christian name, to deal with these problems of international peace and order is not everywhere conceded.

"I am not thinking only of the Nazi idea of which Dr. Micklem told earlier in this series—the idea that the Churches should deal with heaven and leave the things of earth to the Fuehrer. But there is also the idea that these matters are exclusively technical; they belong to a sphere of special study; and some people ask why should the Churches, whose job is to preach God's word, 'butt into' this sphere with which as Churches they cannot claim to be specially conversant. Now there is, of course, something in this, or, at least, there would be if world order and permanent peacemaking were matters of an entirely technical kind. But I can say without any hesitation that there is in Britain to-day a far wider understanding than I have ever known of the fact that international order and peace are ultimately moral questions.

"Men who are not very definitely in the Churches, or not even known as Christians, will say frankly that they have come to see how the problem of Europe, and, for that matter, the problem of the world, is at bottom, not merely technical, but moral, even perhaps spiritual. It is the problem of how to create a real community. So that when the American commission in the preamble to the six points says that 'the first and paramount task of the Christian Churches remains that of bringing more persons to subject their lives to the will of God as revealed in Jesus Christ,' we agree with all our hearts. That is the root of the business.

"Behind the technicalities of economic reconstruction and political device lies the truth, that God is the Creator of the world and the Father of all men, that He created men and nations for fellowship in His family, that His purpose is the supreme reality of human history, and that policies which depart from that purpose must eventually lead to failure and disaster."

Dr. Paton's concluding paragraph (after he had surveyed the many practical problems involved in the construction of Christian world order) was as follows:

"As we look at all these gigantic tasks, we need to remember that God has set us in this particular historic moment, and that we are in the hands of His providence. What nations can do for good and evil, in modern conditions of organised power, is greater than in past ages. But we are not in a world of chance, we are in our Father's house, and we need to rise to the height of the historic moment in which we are set, not trusting only to our own cleverness and skill in devising, but far more to His love and guidance."

THE SWEDISH PRIMATE PREACHES IN DENMARK DURING THE CRISIS

It happened that the Primate of Sweden, Dr. Erling Eidem, was visiting Copenhagen just as the crisis in Denmark was rising to its height. In the course of a sermon in the Church of Our Lady, Copenhagen (subsequently broadcast in the Danish Home Service), Archbishop Eidem said:

"To all you beloved brothers and sisters, children of Denmark's Church, I convey warm and sincere greetings from Sweden's sister Church. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the greetings which you sent this afternoon to the Church of Sweden. You can be certain there is always a place for you in our hearts, our thoughts and

prayers. Yes, kinship between us has never been stronger, so indispensable as during these times. As neither height nor depth can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord, no power will be able to divide us from each other. Darkness and oppression will only bring us nearer to God, and thus nearer each other. God bless and keep Denmark and its Christian people, God save Denmark's beloved King and his family, God save Denmark's people, old and young.

"The thoughts and the deliberations of this meeting are focused on our Youth, the hope of the future. With burning hearts we wish that our beloved Youth shall be won over by Christ, and to Christ, for we are convinced that no other Master can make their lives so strong, so rich, so beautiful, so noble. Peace is God's glory in the North. Our early years are a blessed and favoured period of our lives. The heart beats strong and warm with our youth. Sound youth is moved and carried away by ideals with particular intensity. It wants a symbol to assemble round and to follow. It wants the flag hoisted on high. We are living in a world-wide historic struggle between ideologies. To be able to tell the difference between true and false ideals concerns our lives, and each one of us has to enter the fight, a spiritual struggle and, therefore, all the more profound and serious.

"In his Epistle to the Christian congregation in Philippi, St. Paul gives us a watchword for Christian ideals. He exhorts his fellow brethren to approve things that are excellent, true, righteous, pure, lovable and worthy of respect. The man who wrote the Epistle to the Christians at Philippi was a man who had been thrown into prison. Because of his faith, he had been deprived of his liberty.

"He refused to betray his trust as a fearless messenger of God's great tidings of joy to the world through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Because of this, the Epistle is of particular value to Christian hearts in these days. St. Paul was an aged and worn-out man, a tired man, but we notice little in his message of the tiredness of an old man, or the depression of the prisoner. The Apostle's exhortations are imbued with unbounded enthusiasm and a shining belief. In reality, the Apostle speaks like a young man, a free man. His message of joy—which may be described as the Christian ideal—constitutes an appeal which goes straight to the heart, particularly of young people. Notice how fearlessly he

makes his appeal. Only truth, righteousness, purity and goodness of heart can be true ideals for people created by God, who Himself is Truth, Righteousness, Purity and Goodness. The Apostle's ideal of human behaviour throughout bears the stamp of Christianity.

"We have lived through, and are living through hard times. We do not know if still more difficult times approach. We all long for peace and serenity, but we experience little of it these days. But we do know that God, the Almighty, is always present. He bears the name of the God of Peace, and He is able, through all oppression, to give us indestructible peace—if we believe in Him and walk in His paths. My beloved Danish sisters and brothers, may the peace of God be with you all. In Jesus' name, Amen."

BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUNDAY

The following statement is issued from Lambeth Palace:

H.M. the King has approved a proposal that this year the celebration of the victory over the German Air Force in the autumn of 1940 should be combined with Civil Defence Day, and that Sunday, September 26th, should be specially observed as Battle of Britain Sunday.

The Government Departments concerned are inviting Commands and local authorities, where suitable arrangements can be made, to hold parades to be attended by representatives of the fighting services, the civil defence services, and aircraft factory workers. It is most fitting that we should during that season of the year give thanks to God for the great deliverance of our country which He wrought through the courage, the skill, and the unwearying devotion to duty of all those who contributed to the victory. It is hoped that all may be united on that day in thankful commemoration, and that where special services can conveniently be arranged this may be done.

In accordance with the practice followed in the last two years, contributions will be offered on Sunday, September 26th, for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

The statement is signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; the Archbishop of Liverpool, on behalf of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of England and Wales; and the Moderator of the Federal Council of the Free Churches.